# Preparing The Dead

Islamic Method of Funeral and Burial



By Ustaz Ahmad Husain Mubarakpuri (رحمةالله عليه)

# **CONTENTS**

Translator's Note	3
Foreword	4
Islamic Method of Funeral and Burial	
At the time of death	7
Bathing the body	9
Preparing the kafan	13
Carrying the Janazah	16
Janazah prayer	17
Grave and burial	21
Visiting graves	23
Righteous ending	27
Glossary	28

# Translator's Note

It is a sheer mercy and favour of Allah سبحانه وتعلى upon me that He enabled me to make an attempt at translating this booklet originally titled "Tajheez-ul-Amwat", which was a chapter in a larger body of work titled "Sabeel-ul-Akhirah", this section was published separately due to demand. The copy I have used to translate from is one published by Markaz Ilmi, Bombay, 1965.

It is a comprehensive guide related to the final rites with practical step by step guide. I have added a glossary to enable the readers to refer to for the different terminologies used in this booklet.

For ease of understanding I have also added some illustrations which were not in the original book.

I am most grateful to Sheikh Mohammad Amir for helping with the translation and providing guidance as well as for proof-reading the translation. Some parts have been abridged.

Fawzan Khalid Abdul Hafiz 15 July 2011

### **FOREWORD**

By Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri (رحمة الله عليه)

# **Some Important Facts**

All Praise be to Allah سبحانه وتعلى Lord of the worlds and peace and blessings upon his Messenger Muhammad.

Islam is a complete system and principle of life from the cradle to the grave. No part in between is out of the bounds of Islamic teachings. It is due to this comprehensiveness that a Muslim is required to learn the Islamic ways for every step of the way.

"O you who believe enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."

(Qur'an, 2:208)

From birth until the final moments of death, no, until after death the bright path of Islam in the form of the Qur'an and the Sunnah will be open until the Last Day and Muslims will take that path.

However, unfortunately many wrong beliefs and practices have entered contrary to the true Islamic teachings, which must be corrected. In many places we find many rituals and methods that not only have no basis in Islam but can be contrary to Islamic teachings such as placing flowers on the deceased, reciting poetry or other such utterances in the front of the funeral procession, calling

azan on the grave, reciting Quran upon some soil, reciting talgeen after the burial, placing arranged flowers on the grave, paying someone to read Quran on the grave, marking the third day and the fortieth day by cooking food, dedicating food, and other things which have no basis in Islam. Different places have different rituals and different places do more of some things and less of Others organise fairs during the night of baraah [lailatunnisf min Shaaban] and lailatul Qadr, gathering together of men and women in the graveyard and spending the night feasting and socialising are all found in different places. All these things are contrary to the Islamic teachings and the practices of the Prophet and the salaf. One should not get involved in these kinds of things. Unfortunately, many consider these non-Islamic activities necessary in the name of Islam. Not only that but if someone follows the true Islamic teachings in funeral and burial they are looked down on. This is a bad thing and should be shunned.

The final rites should be in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad صلی الله علیه وسلم. Supplications for forgiveness of the deceased and conferring of rewards should be done in a simple way. Visiting the grave, reciting the Qur'an, making supplications, and paying charity are ways to confer rewards to the deceased. In fact, doing good in the name of Allah with the intention of giving the rewards to the deceased is sufficient.

Regarding the rituals and rites of funeral and burial, this

booklet by Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Ahmad Husain Rasoolpuri Mubarakpuri (d. 26 Rajab 1359AH / 1940), is a comprehensive guide, and contains the summary of the authentic books of ahadith and fiqh. If we follow this book and conduct our funerals and burials according to it we will be saved from baseless rituals and innovations.

For this reason, this book, which was just a short chapter at the end of his book "Sabeel-ul-akhirah" [Path of the Hereafter], is being published separately as a booklet. In reality it is a very comprehensive and a very authentic paper on this subject.

Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri Friday 8 Zi Qadah 1384AH

# بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# Islamic Method of Funeral and Burial

All Praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds and peace and blessings on the best of creation our leader Muhammad and his family and all of his companions.

Ahmad Husain Azmi (may Allah forgive him) petitions in the service of the Ulama that upon completion of the book Sabeel -ul-aakhirah the members of the Madrasa Anjuman Islamiyah in Gorakhpur who, having read the book, asked if a booklet about the teachings on funerals and burials can be prepared in order to benefit the Muslims of the area who are unaware of the issues and so may educate themselves.

Therefore, in obedience to these sincere Ulama, I present the teachings about rituals and rites from what I have extracted out of the fataawa into some parts titled Islamic Method of Funeral and Burial.

I consider it my good fortune to do so and a means of benefit for me in the Hereafter. May Allah سبحانه وتعلى grant benefit from it to the Muslims and give taufeeq for good deeds.

#### Part One: At the time of death

When the signs of death appear on someone, among some of the signs are, both their legs may become weak and loose, the nose may become somewhat distorted, a cavity may appear around the temple areas, and the skin over the face may tighten or may get pulled, then lay the person on the right side towards the qiblah. It is recommended that they should be encouraged and guided to recite kalimah shahadah. Pious people should recite out loud near the dying person

[I bear witness there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his apostle and messenger]

However, the dying person should not be pressured into reciting because they may be going through their own suffering. If they recite it once, it is sufficient. Therefore, if after reciting the kalimah they utter something else then they should again be encouraged to repeat the kalimah, [it should be the final utterance]. It is better to sit close to them and recite Surah YaSeen, there should be good and pious people around.

Once death has occurred, tie a strip of cloth around their chin over the head [so that the mouth remains closed] and gently close the eyes. While tying the cloth strip read

Straighten their arms and legs. It is better to remove the clothing and cover the body with a sheet and lay it on a bed or bench, and not place it on the floor.

After this, announce the death and inform the relatives and friends of the deceased so that they can participate in the Janazah prayers and pray for the deceased. It is better to repay any debt owed by the deceased and hasten the burial. It is forbidden to recite Qur'an next to the body before it is bathed.

### Part Two: Bathing the body

Bathing the body is a farz-e-kefayah.

When you have intended to bathe the body fumigate the surface where bathing is to take place with aroma either once, three times, or five times around the surface.

# Preparing an adult for bathing

- 1. Lay the body on the prepared surface, it is better to shield the bench with something such as sheets from all sides
- 2. Remove the clothing and cover the parts from the navel to the knees
- 3. Wrap a piece of cloth around your hand and cleanse the private parts from the front and the back with water to purify it
- 4. Make wodhu of the deceased

# Preparing a child for bathing

- 1. Lay the body on the prepared surface, it is better to shield the bench with something such as sheets from all sides
- 2. Remove the clothing and cover the parts from the navel to the knees
- 3. Wrap a piece of cloth around your hand and cleanse the private parts from the front and the back with water to purify it

- 4. Wash the face
- 5. Wash both arms up to the elbows and do masah
- 6. Wash both feet starting with the right side

Do not put water in the nose and mouth. According to some Ulama, wet a piece of small cloth and rub the inside of the mouth cleaning the teeth, the sides of the lips, and the inside of the nose

The bath water should be warm and if possible boiled with jujube leaves, remove the leaves after boiling. If the deceased has long hair then squeeze some checker-bloom or hibiscus into the water and wash the head and the beards with it. You can also use soap instead.

# **Bathing**

- 1. Turn the body to the left and bathe the whole length of the right side of the body
- 2. Turn the body to the right side and do the same so that all parts of the body are washed
- 3. Sit the body up and rub the stomach gently downwards and cleanse any waste that may be excreted as a result. There is no need to repeat the bath or the wodhu even if there is any waste excreted

Do not comb or cut any hair or nail.

If a person dies from drowning they should be bathed as well, however, if the body has swollen to the extent that it is not possible to bathe it in the prescribed way then simply pour water over it.

If a baby dies after birth, it should be bathed as well. It is better to give a name to the child, then bathe the body and pray Janazah as usual. For a baby born already dead or premature, bathing is still required, but afterwards simply wrap the body in cloth and bury it. There is no Janazah prayer in such cases.

If the religion of the deceased is unknown, then if there are any signs of Islamic faith on the body they will be treated as Muslim or if the body is found in a Muslim population then the body will be taken to be that of a Muslim.

For a person who dies at sea, after bathing and funeral rites the body is to be tied to something heavy and placed in the sea.

It is Mustahab that the person giving the bath is with wodhu. If they are not or are in a state of janabah or menstruation or non-Muslim then it is undesirable but permissible.

It is Mustahab for a close relative of the deceased to give the bath but if none among them know how to do it then a pious person should do it. They should ensure that all parts of the body are washed. If they see a good sign in the deceased they can tell others but if they see something untoward or a bad sign they should not tell others about it.

Males should bathe the males and females should bathe the females. In cases of children either gender can give the bath.

If a need arises it is possible for a woman to bathe the body of her husband, however, it is not permissible for a man to bathe the body of his wife.

In case of a female body if there are no females available for bathing then a mahram male may perform tayammum of the deceased. If it happens to be the husband doing the bathing then he must wrap a cloth around his hand then perform tayammum of the deceased. If the man doing bathing is a non-mahram of the deceased female he must also wrap a cloth around his hand in the same way. The same applies regardless of the age of the [adult] deceased. In all these cases the man must lower his gaze.

If a male dies and there is no other male to do the bathing then a mahram woman of the immediate family can conduct tayammum with a cloth wrapped in her hand. If no such woman is present then any woman can conduct tayammum with a cloth wrapped around her hand.

If a boy dies and the father is a non-Muslim, it is better for another Muslim to bathe the body. If a person dies on a journey and no water is available then conduct tayammum and pray Janazah, but if water becomes available after this [before burial] then bathe the body as usual and pray Janazah again.

# Part Three: Preparing the kafan

To give the body a kafan is a farz-e-kefayah.

For a male the sunnah method is to have three pieces of cloths; ezaar (garment covering lower half of body and parts of upper half), qamees (garment covering upper half of body and parts of the lower half), lefafa (garment covering the full body). Just ezaar and lefafah can be sufficient and if none of these are available then whatever is available will suffice. Ezaar and lefafah are full length of the body covering all of it, and the qamees is without sleeves or collar from the neck to the feet.

Some jurists have given preference for a turban if the deceased was an aalim but the shamla Should be in the front.

For a female it is masnoon to have five pieces of cloths; qamees, ezaar, scarf, lefafa, chest cover. Just ezaar, lefafa, and scarf can be sufficient. Qamees should be from the shoulder to the ankles, chest cover should be from the chest to the knees or navel, and the scarf should be around the length of two arms and the width about two feet. The ezaar and the lefafah should be from head to

toe to cover the whole body.

In cases where this is not possible then it is permissible to have two pieces of cloths for females and one piece of cloth for males, otherwise makrooh.

For youths entering puberty, the rules for adults apply. If it is a male child then one cloth and for a female child two pieces of cloths are required.

For males pure silk and cloths dyed in saffron or kusum is makrooh but permissible for females. The best kafan is white cloth, whether it is new or old makes no difference.

Where the deceased was wealthy then the masnoon is better. If the deceased was poor or has many inheritors then it is better to spend as less as possible.

The way to put on the kafan is to first give one, three, or five rounds of aromatic fumigations.

#### For males

- Spread the lefafa
- Spread the ezaar on top of the lefafa
- Lay the body on it
- Put on the qamees
- Apply perfume to the head, beards and the body but not perfume from saffron [or containing alcohol]

- Apply kaafoor (camphor) on the forehead, nose, both hands, both knees, and both feet
- Wrap the ezaar first from the left side then from the right side

Wrap the lefafah in the same way and tie a knot

#### For females

- Spread the chest cover
- Spread the lefafah
- Spread the ezaar on top of that
- Lay the body on it
- Put on the gamees.
- Part the hair into two and place it outside the gamees on either side
- Place the scarf over the head and cover the hair on either side with the scarf
- Wrap the ezaar on top of this
- Wrap the lefafa

Place the chest cover over the chest pulling out from under the arms and wrapping it down to the knees.

In putting the kafan and applying the perfume the ihram of hajj has no significance over cloth that is not ihram of hajj.

If the deceased has no wealth then their kafan is obligatory upon the one responsible for their food and shelter.

A woman's kafan is her husbands responsibility. If the

husband is so poor that he cannot afford it then it is the responsibility of the people around him such as relatives or neighbours.

If a traveller or a poor person dies and people collect money for the kafan and some money is left over then it should be returned to the donor if the donor of that portion can be identified otherwise that money should be used for the same purpose in another funeral with the same circumstances, and if that does not eventuate then it should be given in charity.

# Part Four: Carrying the Janazah

The masnoon way of carrying the Janazah to the grave is for four people to hold each corner of the carriage/coffin in which the body lays, and after every ten steps different people take up each of the corners.

A better way is to hold it up on the right shoulder of the front [head], then after ten steps the corner on the back [feet], then after another ten steps the front corner on the left shoulder and then after another ten steps the back right corner on the left shoulder. This being continuously swapped by different people on the way.

If the body is that of a child then it is permissible to carry it on the arms in the front of the person carrying it.

Janazah should be carried speedily while maintaining dignity and poise. The head should be at the front. People walking with the Janazah should not walk on either sides but behind it calmly, it is permissible to walk in front of the Janazah. If one needs to catch up then one can walk fast or even run. It is better to walk and permissible to go on other means of transport in which case it is makrooh to go in front of the Janazah.

If the Janazah is that of the relative, neighbour, or a pious person then participating in the Janazah is better than praying nafl salah. People going with the Janazah should be quiet. Talking, making supplications, or reciting the Qur'an out loud is makrooh.

Once you reach the graveyard it is makrooh to sit down before the Janazah is put down, it is better to not sit at all until after the completion of the burial.

Wailing, screaming, crying loudly, tearing off clothes etc are forbidden. These are rituals of the jaheliya and should be avoided. There is no sin is crying alone. It is always far better to exercise patience. Women should not accompany the Janazah, if a woman who is likely to cry accompanies the Janazah she should be stopped. It is better that people oblige in carrying the Janazah but paying to carry it is also permissible.

# Part Five: Janazah Prayer

Janazah prayer is farz-e-kefayah.

When one prays all are absolved of the responsibility, but if no one does then all will be accountable.

The condition for Janazah prayer is that the body has been

bathed. If one is buried without bathing and without Janazah prayer, or the bathing took place after the Janazah prayer and buried, or prayed Janazah prayer without bathing and buried, then under these circumstances the Janazah prayer can be performed on the grave within three days of the burial.

A Muslim who disobeyed the ruler or commits fraud and thuggery or has killed their mother or father then Janazah prayer will not be performed on them.

One who swung a sword at the enemy but the sword swung on to his own neck and he got killed as a result or someone who committed suicide or died in qesas or stoning will all be prayed Janazah upon.

The person leading the Janazah prayer should be the imam of the city, if not, the imam of the locality, if not, then close relative of the deceased. Women and children can not lead Janazah prayer. If a person made a will that their Janazah prayer should be performed by a certain person then such a will is not valid. If the deceased has no relative and no imams are available then, if the deceased is a female, her husband will be the wali otherwise the people of the locality who are neighbours.

One who had the Janazah prayer performed on them the farz is discharged, there is no second Janazah prayer for a deceased.

In case the Janazah prayer happens to be at the time of Maghrib, then pray the Maghrib farz first followed by the Janazah prayer and then the sunnah of the Maghrib.

The requirements for Janazah prayer are the same as those for

the daily five prayers. Things that nullify the daily five prayers also nullify the Janazah prayers.

The intention for leading Janazah prayer is simply that "I perform this obligation of Janazah for Allah facing the qiblah." The muqtadi can add to this that they are doing so behind such and such an imam. Even if the followers simply make the intention that "I am following this imam" that is also correct.

The requirements for performing the Janazah prayer correctly are that the body is placed in the front. It is better that the public make three lines, for example, if there are seven people present then one is imam, three people in the first line, two in the second line, and one in the last. The imam should stand in line with the chest of the deceased.

There are four takbirs in Janazah prayer, if one is missed then Janazah prayer has to be repeated.

#### **Method:**

- 1. Raise the hands to the ears and say Allaho Ak-
- 2. Recite the sana
- 3. Then raise the hands again and say Allaho Akbar
- 4. Recite darood, then again say Allaho Akbar again

If the Janazah is for an adult/baaligh recite:

اللهم اغفر لحينا وميتنا وشاهدنا و غائبنا وصغيرنا وكبيرنا وذكرنا وانثنا اللهم من احبيته منا فاحيه على االاسلام ومن توفيته منا فتوفه على الايمان

or other supplications if one has not memorized this. After this say Allaho Akbar.

If the deceased is a boy then recite the following supplication as well:

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اللهم اجعله لنا فرطا واجعله لنا اجرا وذخرا واجعله لنا شافعا و مشفعا
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If the deceased is a girl then recite the same supplication thus:

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اللهم اجعلها لنا فرطا واجعلها لنا اجرا وذخرا واجعلها لنا شافعة و مشفعة
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Or another supplication if one has not memorized this.

- 5. Say Allaho Akbar
- 6. Do salam on both sides as usual

Only the imam should say takbir out loud, the muqtadis should say it quietly. If someone arrives after the Janazah has already started then he should wait until the imam says takbir and join in. Once the imam completes the salam the late-comer should complete the rest of the takbir before doing salam.

If there is more than one Janazah, it is possible to do them separately or put all the bodies in the front and do one Janazah for all of them once. Janazah prayer can be performed in the field or in the home but performing it in a masjid where congregational prayers are held is makrooh, however, in cases of necessity, such as weather, there is no harm.

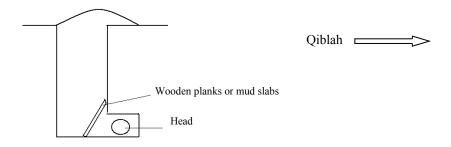
## Part Six: Grave and Burial

Burying the dead is a farz-e-kefayah.

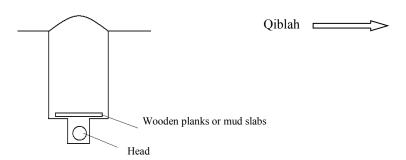
There are two types of graves. One is lahad and the other is sandooq. Lahad is where a grave is dug and at the bottom of it a cavity resembling a channel is dug on the qiblah side big enough for the body to be placed in it. This is the sunnah way. Where the earth is soft, sandooq method is permissible.

Sandooq grave is one where the grave is dug and at the bottom a similar cavity, big enough to fit the body, is dug along the length of the grave but in the centre of it. This is covered with wooden boards or planks. The illustrations below show the two types of graves longitudinally:

#### Lahad



#### **Sandooq**



It is better for the depth of the grave to be the same as chest height and the length to be full, i.e. the full length of the body. The width should be half the length of the body.

Those handling the body down into the grave should be strong and pious people. Place the body next to the grave on the qiblah side then bring it down into the grave gently. While placing the body in the lahad/sandoog recite:

If the deceased is a female then it is better that the people handling the body into the grave are close mahram relatives. While bringing down the female body make a covering to veil it.

Once the body is in the grave, turn it on its right side towards the qiblah and untie the knot in the kafan. Close the lahad with clay or wood. Fill the grave with the same soil that was dug from it, do not mix other soil

with it. It is better to start filling from the side of the head. Each person should place the soil in the grave three times. While putting soil in the grave the first time recite منهاخلقنكم second time وفيها نعيد كم second time وفيها نعيد كم Then fill the grave completely as usual and sprinkle water over it.

To make the grave into a structure such as a raised platform is not allowed. Building masjid or house over it, to sit, sleep, walk, urinate, place epitaph etc is makrooh.

Immediately after the burial it is Mustahab to sit by the grave for two hours and recite Qur'an and make supplications for the forgiveness of the deceased. This brings maghfirah and ajr, and reduces azaab to the deceased.

The grave should be visited periodically. While at the grave, stand by it and recite some verses from the Qur'an and confer the reward to the soul of the deceased.

For one who dies on a journey, it is better that they are buried at the place of their death.

To cut the grass or trees or their new branches grown on a grave is makrooh.

# **Part Seven: Visiting Graves**

It is Mustahab to visit graves weekly. Fridays, Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays are better. It is also preferable

to visit the graves in the night of bara-ah, the first ten days of zil Hijjah, the two Eids, and the ashara of Muharram. Muhammad bin Wase' (حمةالله عليه) said the deceased recognizes the visitors on Thursdays and Fridays.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to visit the graves of the martyrs of Uhd every year from Madina Munawwarah, and after him Abu Bakr and Umar (رضى الله عنهما) did the same.

Allamah bin Hajar (رحمةالله عليه) has written that if the visitors to the graves commit sin and practice innovations then to stop visiting the graves for this reason is a mistake. Visiting the grave should continue while continuously trying to correct any wrong practices. If an elderly lady visits the graves in order to remember death and pray for the deceased then it is permissible.

When you make intention to go and visit the grave then it is Mustahab to first pray two rakat of salat and in each rakah, after Surah Fatihah, recite Ayat-ul-Kursi once and Surah Ikhlas three times, and confer the reward to the deceased. For this Allah سبحانه وتعلى lightens the grave and the person making the prayers also gets a lot of rewards. After this special prayer proceed straight to the grave.

Once in the grave yard, take the shoes off and facing the graves with the back to the qiblah say

then recite whatever you can and confer the rewards to the deceased. If possible, recite Sura Al-Fatiha, the first five verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat-ul-Kursi, the last two verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, Surah YaSeen, Surah Al-Mulk, Surah Al-Takathur, and Surah Al-Ikhlas eleven times or seven times and supplicate to Allah to confer the rewards to such and such person. Abu Bakr bin Saeed said it is Mustahab to recite Surah Al-Ikhlas ten times or seven times, if the deceased was sinful then they will have forgiveness and if they were pious then the person reciting will have forgiveness.

The Ulama have said that on completing any nafl ibadah a person should pray to have the rewards of the nafl conferred to all the believing men and the believing women, they all benefit from it and the rewards do not reduce. This is the belief of ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah.

After the passing away of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Hazrat Umar r.a. made Umra every year for the Prophet S.A.W. Ibn Taufeek performed seventy Hajj for the Prophet S.A.W. And ibn Siraj completed the recitation of the entire Qur'an ten thousand times for the Prophet. صلى الله عليه وسلم

It is Mustahab to visit a grieved person over three days to share their sorrows and give them encouragement and support. It is a means of reward for relatives, neighbours, and acquaintances. The manner of sharing their sorrows and giving support and encouragement should be along the lines that "may Allah سبحانه وتعلى

give maghfirah to the deceased, forgive their sins, descent His Blessings upon the deceased, and give you the strength to be patient".

The family of the deceased should arrange for a place to welcome visitors whether in their homes or in the masjid. People should visit for one day, two days, or three days and encourage patience.

Crying loudly, tearing clothes, hitting oneself on the face or the chest, putting soil on the head, and men wearing black to express grief are all signs of jaheliya and one should avoid all these things. Shedding tears in sadness is natural and there is no harm in it.

It is permissible for the neighbours and relatives to send food to the family of the deceased once or twice. The ritual of cooking food by the family of the deceased on a certain day [or cycle] after death and inviting everyone for a feast is wrong and should be not be done. What is better is to prepare and feed the poor whenever it is possible and pray that its reward is conferred to the deceased. May Allah سبحانه وتعلى given taufeek for good deeds.

All Praise be to Allah سبحانه وتعلى for His favour that this book is completed in Shawwal 1346H.

# **Righteous Ending**

By Abul Aufa Muhammad Yahya, ustaz Jamiah Arabia Ihyaul-Oloom, Mubarakpur.

After hamd-o-salat it should be known that all Muslims should supplicate for a righteous end to life and to leave this world on imaan. You should do things which will cause a righteous ending.

To carry out the funeral and burial rites in the way of the sunnah and the righteous salaf is also a culmination of a righteous ending. Correct fulfilment of the last rites is a sign that the deceased died on imaan, therefore utmost care should be taken to ensure all the rites and rituals are followed correctly.

This information by my late father is an excellent guide. May Allah سبحانه وتعلى give all Muslims taufeeq to live life on Islam and so end it on Islam as well, and leave the world on the way of Islam. Ameen.

Ajr - Reward Azaab - Punishment

Darood - Sending peace on the Prophet

Ezaar - Garment covering lower half of body

Farz kifaya - Collective obligation that is deemed to be fulfilled if some people fulfil it

Ibadah - Worship

Jaheliyah - Ignorance (pre-Islamic)

Janabah - In a state requiring bath

Janaza Funeral

Kafan - Shroud

Kusum - a type of leafLahad - type of grave

Lefafah - garment covering the full body

Maghfirah - forgiveness

Mahram - family member with whom marriage is forbidden

Masnoon - way of the Prophet SAW

Muqtadi - people standing behind imam

Mustahab - better Nafl - voluntary

Qamees - garment covering upper body

Qesas - Where sentence imposed on a relative

Salaf - predecessors

Sana - supplication at the start of salah

Sandooq - type of grave

Shamlah - cloth from turban that hangs from it

Takbir - utterance of "Allahu Akbar"

Tayammum - ablution without water

Wali - guardian